

# MEMORANDUM

**State of Alaska**  
**Department of Administration**  
**Division of Personnel**

**To:** Administrative Service Directors  
Human Resource Managers

**Date:** September 16, 2002

**From:** Sharon Barton, Director

**Phone:** 465-4429

**Subject:** HR Classification Study  
Payroll Specialists

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Attached herewith are the final class specifications for the revised Payroll Specialist series. The class specifications are effective September 1, 2001.

## HISTORY

The State of Alaska and the Confidential Employees Association entered into Letter of Agreement (LOA) 01-KK-048 as part of the 2000 – 2003 collective bargaining agreement. The LOA required the State to conduct a classification study of Human Resource job classifications placed primarily within the Confidential Unit. The study was to include, but was not limited to, the following job classes:

Human Resource Manager I, II, III  
Personnel Officer I, II  
Personnel Specialist I, II, III  
Personnel Assistant I, II  
Employee Resource Consultant Specialist  
Employee Resource Consultant Manager  
Labor Relations Specialist I, II, III  
Personnel Manager I, II

The Labor Management Committee (LMC) established by the contract identified the following problems and concerns to be addressed:

Personnel Assistant I:

- Difficulty exists in recruitment and in the interpretation of the qualifications.

Human Resource Managers:

- Range 19 (HRM I) is obsolete.
- Criteria established at all levels to not seem realistic distinctions of complexity.
- Is this a separate job class series or an extension of the Personnel Officer?
- The level of influence on department/“change element” influence.

Salary Ranges for all HR jobs:

- New factors – delegation and federal mandates

- Retention and recruitment
- Increased liability

Career Tracks:

- Generalist vs. Specialist positions
- Inequity
- No range 16 exists in the generalist – either as a technician or entry professional.

Centralized vs. Delegated:

- Equity in job classes available
- Overtime exemption inequity

The Department of Administration solicited bids to conduct the study and develop new class specifications. A contract was awarded under the procurement rules and the contractor met with the Committee several times, held group interviews with selected incumbents, and produced draft specifications. After several unsuccessful attempts to improve the quality of the work product, the State cancelled the contract. A Working Group composed of the union members of the LMC and several Division of Personnel (DOP) staff members began anew and completed work on the study. The State contracted with Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS) to study the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager job classes. The consultant interviewed the incumbents and issued a report and recommendations to the Director of Personnel in July 2002.

All Position Descriptions (PDs) were read and reviewed. A list of duty statements representative of the various HR functional areas and levels of work was developed and distributed to the Human Resource Managers (HRMs). The HRMs categorized the tasks as clerical, technical, or administrative. Responses from each department were compiled and reviewed; the Working Group assigned the category when there was no consensus among the department responses.

Teams of interviewers from the Division of Personnel and the departments conducted position interviews with the incumbents of most positions in the departments and in DOP. The results of the interviews were reported to the Working Group and used, along with the PDs and function lists, to develop and clarify the class specifications.

The consultant interviewed all Human Resource Managers and Personnel Managers as planned, and requested additional interviews with the Classification Manager and the Employee Programs Manager. From those interviews and from information supplied by each department, the consultant prepared a report of findings to the Director of Personnel.

The LMC and the Division of Personnel hosted a briefing in late July at which CPS consultant Rick McWilliams presented his report and recommendations regarding the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager class series. Draft specifications were distributed for the other human resource series included in the study. Reallocation of positions in classifications covered by the study was suspended effective August 1, 2002, to allow for completion and implementation of the study.

A formal comment period followed the briefing during which departments were invited to make specific remarks and suggestions about all but the Human Resource Manager, Human Resource

Officer and Personnel Manager job classes. All comments were collected by the Division of Personnel and forwarded to the Working Group, which considered and made a determination regarding each recommendation. Reports summarizing these decisions will be distributed to agencies following implementation of Phase One. While the comment period was underway, two general meetings were held to discuss questions raised by agency representatives. The first meeting addressed the technical series; the second meeting addressed the professional series. Both meetings were well attended, with representation from most departments.

Whereas Phase I of the study was scheduled for implementation on September 16, 2002, the Working Group imposed a deadline of August 1, 2002, for revised PDs to be considered part of the study.

Following revision of the class specifications based on the comments received and the further deliberations of the Working Group, three test allocation sessions were held. Definitions and Distinguishing Characteristics for the following classes were considered: Human Resource Assistant, Human Resource Technician I-III, Payroll Supervisor, Human Resource Specialist I-III, and Human Resource Officer. The Working Group considered the issues raised in the test allocations and made final revisions to the class specifications. In addition, the Working Group concluded that it needed additional information in order to resolve questions about work performed by positions that provide professional human resource services exclusively to specific divisions or regions, as well as those that act as “seconds” or “assistants” to Human Resource Managers. The Working Group determined that action on the individual positions should be deferred to Phase Two, that audits should be conducted, and that final action on class specifications occur in conjunction with the Human Resource Manager and Personnel Manager job classes. The recommendation was forwarded to the LMC.

The Working Group finalized the class specifications and presented its work product and recommendations to the full LMC on September 3, 2002. At that meeting the Working Group recommended that positions providing comprehensive HR services to regions or divisions, as well as those that serve in the capacity of a “second” or an “Assistant HRM,” be given additional scrutiny and that actions on these positions be deferred until Phase Two. The LMC concurred. As a result, DOP staff will audit these positions to develop accurate position information covering the study period. This information will be used to draft Phase Two class specifications and, if appropriate, to recommend revisions to the Human Resource Specialist series to incorporate all or some of the audited work.

The Working Group deferred its review of the consultant’s report until after the implementation of the Phase I class specifications on September 16; work on the Human Resource Managers, Personnel Managers, Human Resource Officer, Payroll Manager, and Retirement & Benefits Manager will be completed at a later date.

The Director approved the final class specifications. The following job classes and series are established:

- Human Resource Assistant
- Human Resource Technician I, II, III
- Payroll Supervisor

Payroll Specialist I, II, III  
AMHS Dispatcher  
Human Resource Specialist I, II, III  
Labor Relations Analyst I, II, III, IV

The interview teams reviewed the PDs, interview notes, and any additional information in conjunction with the final class specifications and recommended individual position allocations.

## **SCOPE**

The study was limited to positions allocated to Human Resource job classifications placed primarily within the Confidential Unit. Positions allocated to job classes shared with other bargaining units were not included (i.e. Analyst Programmers). Departments were invited to submit PDs of individual clerical positions that they believed might perform work properly allocated to a HR class.

## **SERIES CONCEPTS**

Payroll Specialist I-III is an administrative series in the Department of Administration, Division of Finance in which incumbents perform a variety of professional activities in the administration, management, and operation of the state payroll accounting system. Positions participate in system planning, establish goals, develop and test system design and modification, identify and resolve problems in the payroll system's internal operations, and provide expert guidance, problem resolution, and instruction on statewide policies and procedures to agency payroll staff. Related technical and entry level work is included in the definition, distinguishing characteristics, and examples of duties of the Human Resource Technician series.

**Payroll Specialist I** is the journey level of the series. Under general direction, Payroll Specialists I analyze, audit, evaluate and advise on payroll problems and practices. Incumbents independently correct errors and resolve problems to complete payroll processing, analyze production reports to identify systemic problems, and make recommendations to resolve major problems. Incumbents apply knowledge of the intricacies of the statewide payroll system, the relationships and interactions within the system, and the interactions between the statewide payroll system and other systems such as the statewide accounting system or state retirement systems. Assignments are primarily structured, standard and recurring, requiring analysis and the use of independent judgment and discretion to resolve systemic errors and complete payroll processing. Contacts are primarily with departmental payroll staff to explain policies and provide instruction on procedures.

**Payroll Specialist II** is the advanced level of the series. Under general direction, Payroll Specialists II provide support and expertise in the administration of the statewide payroll system, serve as system experts to agency management and staff and participate in developing project plans and implementation schedules for system upgrades or changes. Payroll Specialists II perform assignments under one of two options: 1) through analysis of programmer's functional or summary documents, determine the expected impact of system changes and upgrades, write and execute test plans, prepare test environments, run test jobs, analyze test results and determine the need for additional testing, programming changes, or readiness for

implementation; or 2) supervise the production payroll team. Contacts are ordinarily with division management and programming staff to develop and coordinate system testing and resolve systemic problems and with departmental payroll staff or outside users of the payroll system to resolve catastrophic errors or interface problems with other systems.

**Payroll Specialist III** is the first managerial level of the series, serving as assistant to the Payroll Manager. Under general direction, the Payroll Specialist III works with management to develop long-range plans and strategies for the statewide payroll system; initiates and directs project plans; serves as system representative to software vendor personnel and outside users of payroll information; provides ongoing review of policies and procedures, and revises and implements procedures as required. Independently and through subordinates, the Payroll Specialist III manages and controls the integrity of the statewide payroll system and ensures system operations are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, statutes, and regulations. Contacts are ordinarily with top level management to provide information on system capabilities and design and with the vendor of the statewide payroll accounting system to provide information on the requirements of the state.

## ANALYSIS

The LMC questioned whether a need existed for a separate series for professional level payroll related positions in the Division of Finance, or whether the general human resource classes were sufficiently broad to cover this work. Information was obtained from the position descriptions and study interviews, as well as from additional investigative interviews requested by the Working Group to resolve specific questions and from updated position descriptions. The Working Group concluded that there is an identifiable body of administrative work pertaining to the development, enhancement, regulation and operation of the statewide payroll system that occurs only in the Division of Finance, and that the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform the work is sufficiently different to warrant establishment of a separate series.

The final class specifications recognize this distinct body of work, provide for three levels within the Payroll Specialist series, and allow for advancement into the series from the generalist technical and professional classes. The new series incorporates the work previously included in the Payroll Specialist I and II and some duties previously included in the Personnel Specialist series. Some duties performed by positions formerly classified at the professional level were determined to be technical in nature, closely related to or an extension of work performed by Human Resource Technicians in department personnel and payroll units; Division of Finance positions performing this work are properly allocated to the Human Resource Technician series.

## SALARY ANALYSIS

In accord with the principal of internal alignment, the salary ranges for the Payroll Specialist series were compared to administrative and professional classes in the Personnel and Employee Relations family (P14XX), the Accounting and Fiscal family (P12XX), the Data Processing family (P16XX), and the Labor and Employment Services family (P46XX).

The classes most comparable to Payroll Specialist I are Accountant II (R16), Field Auditor I (R16), Payroll Supervisor (recommended R16) and Human Resource Specialist I (recommended

Rq16). These are journey professional positions within an administrative or professional field. Assignments are primarily structured, standard and recurring, include a variety of complicating factors and require analyzing, auditing, evaluating and advising on problems and practices using independent judgment and discretion. Allocation to salary range 16 is appropriate.

The classes most comparable to Payroll Specialist II are Accountant III (R18), Analyst/Programmer III (R18), Internal Auditor III (R19), and Human Resource Specialist II (recommended R18). These are advanced professional positions within an administrative or professional field. Positions require considerable knowledge in a field of expertise to perform the more difficult and complex assignments characterized by a wide variety of complicating factors such as continually changing programs, difficult regulatory or reporting requirements and politically sensitive issues. Allocation to salary range 18 is appropriate.

The classes most comparable to Payroll Specialist III are Accountant IV (R20) and Human Resource Specialist III (recommended R20). These are expert/managerial positions performing the most complex assignments in their specialty, usually involving multi-agency or multi-system interactions, and managing a unit or program that includes advanced level professional positions. Allocation to salary range 20 is appropriate.

## **CONCLUSION**

The work performed in the administration, management and operation of the state payroll accounting system and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required indicate the positions are appropriately grouped into a separate class series from the work performed in the departmental human resource offices. Three distinct levels of work in the Payroll Specialist series were identified: journey, advanced, and first managerial. The class specifications accurately define and distinguish the work, allow for career progression, and provide minimum qualifications that will provide a broad pool of qualified candidates.

Payroll Specialists I, II, and III are assigned to salary ranges 16, 18, and 20, respectively.

The attached class specifications are established September 16, 2002, and are effective retroactively to September 1, 2001, pursuant to LOA 01-KK-048 as amended.